MS061.001

Pack Library Oral History Project

Richard Putnam & Malcolm Gamble

Interviewers: Peggy Gardner

June 29, 2000

Side A

Peggy Gardner (PG): Today is June the 29th in the year 2000 and I'm here with Richard Putnam and Malcolm Gamble, photographers from Asheville. This is the second time I've been out to visit Mr. Putnam and we're at Silver Bluff in Canton, North Carolina. Mr. Putnam you were saying that you met Malcolm when you were shooting wedding photography with you.

Richard Putnam (RP): No, he was shooting for the Citizen-Times and I was shooting weddings.

PG: So you were both often at the same location.

Malcolm Gamble: (MG) Quite a bit.

PG: What years would we be talking about? Malcolm you started in –

MG: I started in '37.

PG: '37 – so about that time. You'd been in business already for a little while.

RP: I was shooting commercially from about '29 – '28's when I started and then in '29 I got shooting commercials and groups and all that bunch of stuff.

PG: Did you do a lot of weddings?

RP: Not then. I didn't do a wedding, it was – when I came back to Asheville it was all commercial. See I'd been in during the war – done all that and taught at Clemson and all that bunch of stuff. I was shooting down there, at a little old paper down there and I done anything that I could. Anyhow I was having a good time with it. It wasn't like (something) and opening a business. A plant I worked for, a steel plant, I done all that stuff. Coxe was down there then and I don't know if he's still living or not.

PG: What's his name?

RP: Coxe. You know him. On Main Street.

PG: He's a photographer?

RP: Yeah, he was a good photographer. He's a good commercial, that's all he done.

PG: Tell me about what you know about him. I'm not sure I know about him.

RP: You don't. I think he's dead. His daughter tried to take over his business but she wasn't a commercial and that's he fooled with, commercial photography. He used to come up to Asheville –

PG: From Greenville, South Carolina?

RP: Yeah, he's in Greenville. When he come up here we'd always – Bob Culbertson, got him to come up and do a talk down there at Biltmore – where they had the bowling alley for a while, then they had this meeting place – it's an insurance place now. Right on the corner there.

PG: In Biltmore?

RP: It was right down in Biltmore. Right close to that church.

MG: He reminded me of two photographers that I had not even – Allen, had you gotten anything on Allen Culbertson?

PG: We have him in our files.

RP: He's dead ain't he.

MG: He just died fairly recently. Allen hadn't been dead too long.

RP: Where's his wife?

MG: She died before he did I believe. Sue.

PG: He was Allan Culbertson but he called his business Allan I believe.

MG: Culbertson.

RP: Allan of Asheville.

MG: Yeah you're right. Allen of Asheville. His dad was a photographer and he had moved on. But Allan Culbertson was a photographer. But another one he made me think about was, what was that's guy's name in Hendersonville that ran that studio?

RP: Barber.

MG: Barber. Yeah, you ever heard of him?

PG: I've recently heard about him.

RP: Now he was a good photographer.

MG: Yeah he was. Of that time.

RP: He was a great friend of mine.

PG: I believe his archives have just gone to the Hendersonville Library.

MG: Also he was a handsome guy wasn't he? He was handsome.

RP: Yes he was. His wife is too. I mean that was a good looking couple. They'd come to conventions together and Don was a very good friend of mine. And when he burnt out, you know his studio burnt out I loaned him my -

PG: It burned down?

RP: Yeah it caught fire in the basement and burnt everything he had up.

PG: Oh my goodness.

RP: Anyhow he got started back up and I loaned him a camera, two cameras actually and a bunch of stuff that he could use – lights - and he finally got set back up. He and myself was very good friends. I don't reckon I had an enemy in this business.

PG: I don't think so.

MG: I just happened to think of those two. I had not thought about them. I got along good with Don, of course you probably had a lot more contact with him. His studio was across the street almost from the Skyland Hotel.

RP: Right on the corner.

PG: I'm glad you reminded me about him.

RP: Don, I was doing a camp – Greystone, down at Saluda, or they called it Saluda – anyhow I was coming through down and Don was on the corner, looking down towards the interstate, way down, and I said "What are you watching?" I got out of the car and went to talk to him a minute. He said "Two planes just went together up there and I'm going down there." And he took off. That's when them two planes collided.

MG: Was that at the – what were they – near Asheville Hendersonville anyway.

RP: It was – you know where his studio was – well if you'd went straight to the highway, well that's were it was.

MG: But do you know who was there first? Do you recall?

PG: Was he?

MG: Yes, first on the scene.

PG: It was a horrible thing, wasn't it.

RP: It was a horrible thing.

MG: You know how I missed all that? I was on vacation at Myrtle Beach.

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PG: Oh, you were on vacation or you would have been there.

RP: The son-in-law, he was in Weaverville, he was volunteering on that rescue squad, and they headed up there, every rescue squad in the world, and they picked up dead bodies, and

PG: It was awful…

RP: and I can remember, the insurance company I was working for was right there on Merrimon Avenue, and they wanted me to go up there, and I said "There ain't no use for me to go up there, the paper's there, and you can get anything you want off of them."

MG: Not necessarily true

RP: I know it.

PG: Didn't always work like that?

RP: Dan? Taylor was an insurance adjuster I was working with and I had a whole bunch of them insurance adjusters, night, day, anytime they wanted you, two or three o'clock in the morning, well, you went.

PG: Did they just call you at home?

RP: Yeah! I remember the worst I seen, I got there, and they held a truck up til I got there, it was 2 o'clock in the morning, and it was cold, it was December, anyhow it had snowed a little bit out my way, and I woke the wife up and I said "Get up, you got to go work them ? station lights, we got a wreck." So, we got dressed and I went down on Valley St. and this girl and boy come off a side street and this eighteen wheeler's coming down and they run under it, and it got on top of her and just drilled her, and cut her half in two, and she was still there when I got there, and they helped the truck and everything up, 'cause they didn't have to move it right quick, and I got my pictures, and then I went on in and run film, made prints and had them up in his office at 8 o'clock, and that was 2:30-3 o'clock in the morning.

PG: Now, when ;you had to do that, you had to do the whole film processing and …

RP: I done everything.

MG: All of us did.

RP: We didn't have nobody to process

PG: It's amazing, I know they're using cameras where they take them and print them out right from the camera.

MG: digital, but now, in those days everybody did their own printing, they whole bit.

RP: They don't now, I doubt where they can make a decent print.

MG: I may have told you this, but for him too, I was at a photographer's meeting, press photographers, about two years ago now, in Asheville, and they were talking among themselves, and they said, they're no longer photographers, they're technicians. That's basically where it is.

RP: Well, I don't know. Man, I wouldn't let nobody print a black and white for me. Now, June Glen, well, I think you went for me, too. You remember when I got sick, and I called June, and he said I had that contract on the power company when they was building that thing,…

PG: Was that Lake Julian?

RP: Anyhow, I done from start, making a damn ?, ? fishing, and I done both those plants, and June, and Malcolm was good enough, they come out and processed that film, shot and processed the film, made the prints, and my wife mounted them, matted, to make a hinge on it, and they was good enough to do that to me…

MG: We did work pretty good together, when you come right down to it.

RP: Yeah, well, look at the convention we covered together.

MG: Yeah, reallly,

RP: "Hold my light for me please!" (laughter)

PG: What convention?

MG: All kinds, all flavors, you name it

PG: So when you had to do those really large group shots, at the convention, is that what you would be doing?

RP: God, we'd do ?figures? Just like the governors would come. Done a table of governors and all their activities, and then I had all these insurance conventions at Grove Park Inn, and I was the only one that could shoot out there. People got mad cause they done me that way, but they only reason, I'm going to tell you this, and Malcolm will back me up, I was the only photographer dressed in a coat and a tie, and a suit, seven days a week.

PG: that made a difference.

MG: they did too .

RP: They did too,

MG: I mean the people now look like rag tailed muffs comparatively (cross talk)

RP: Anyway, I was shooting at Grove Park Inn, and Mr. Thomas, the manager, he called me in his office one day, he says "Putnam, as long as you do like you're doing, dressed like you do out here, which this is a dressy place," which it was, you didn't go in there dining room without a coat and tie…

PG: It's changed now, it's kind of sad when you go up there, and they're t-shirts…

RP: he says "You're the only person that's gonna shoot pictures, other than the news people." I says "Well, I appreciate that… why?" He says, "It don't make no difference. And out on the front of the Grove Park Inn, he put that big sign, no photographer come in here, unless they got a coat and tie on, or suit, I mean a big sign! Right on front of Grove Park Inn, a big sign!

MG: I kind of remember that.

RP: says slacks are forbidden, course Juanita Wilson wore slacks. Boy, she got on my throat, Allen got on me, I don't know why they got mad at me.

MG: Well, now Allen, he used to dress up.

RP: He went a little sloppy some times. I remember we was covering, our newspaper, all of them was out there, I made this group picture, it was Allen, and the people from the newspaper, whole bunch of guys I ? knew, I can't recall their names now, Johnny Jones I believe was out there, but I made a group picture of the whole works, all of them that was out there. One of you? People was in that.

RP: Either you or June.

MG: Well, I, what was John Jones doing out there?

RP: That's what I don't know. Well, he went on a lot of things.

PG: Tell me about him, I don't know much about him.

Both: I can fill you in on Johnny

MG: Actually, Johnny, I was his protégé. That's basically,

PG: Did he teach you?

MG: Well, no, I wouldn't say he taught me, but he helped me a lot. He hired me the first time.

PG: What was his business called?

MG: Well, he was with the newspaper, he was the city editor of the paper. The Times, the Asheville city paper.

RP: That's right.

PG: I see, did he take pictures, too?

MG: Yes, he did. (laughter) I better not say some things… (laughter) I have to say I learned a lot more from other people, you know who I learned a lot from, you're going to be so shocked, maybe, Bob Brown.

RP: Oh, my Lord, have you seen him?

MG: He's dead, long since dead.

PG: Is he? I'd like to know more about him

MG: Do you know who I'm talking about?

PG: Well, I've heard his name

MG: Well, now, Bob, let me tell you

RP: He had that show

MG: Yeah, you know, science fair,

PG: Was he a science teacher at one time?

MG: No, he put on a show, they whaddayoucallit

RP: He ran electricity through your

MG: You know made your ears stand up, now Bob Brown, you talk about a character out of the bush, he was one, now. I have to tell you, talking about learning, Bob Brown was the first photographer I ran into who used the second light. I learned from him

PG: One light was on your camera, and then one was triggered?

MG: Well, when you say one light on the camera, you're getting into some complications. Because, we actually held our lights off the camera…

PG: They were separate off the camera, were they hooked to the camera with a cord?

MG: No. Well, in the very beginning they were, but not for long. We had a photo cell that popped it off. You understand?

PG: Yeah, yeah.

MG: And I believe we were probably the first and for a long time the only people who ever used that.

RP: Yeah, and I had four of those lights. There's teleflash, you set them up like you was going to cover the whole auditorium. A big shot of the auditorium. Set your light up, put a bulb in it, uncover the cap off of it, and you go and shoot and somebody shoot before you do and (cross talk)

PG: and your own light would go off.

MG: and that's what got to be the problem. But now they have it radio controlled.

PG: So you have a frequency and nobody else…

MG: That's right, things have changed…

RP: …there's a ?tube on top, photo cell. And that light had to hit that and it wouldn't kick it off unless it did. The light from the camera would kick that off,

MG: and that thing rotated, though,

PG: and you turned it toward yourself

RP: and we would go out, like a big ?, ? back light, Malcolm and myself and June,

MG: There weren't many people around that used that (cross talk)

PG: Is that what you mean by your second light?

MG: Right, side light

RP: See, if you'd want a back light on some… and you'd set your lights up and shoot it that way,

MG: Now, you're getting into something technically complicated because when he said backlight, in black and white, not as important in color, you agree with me? In black and white you had to make your own retouching almost, and what we liked to see was a rim, see, if he was against something light, he wouldn't show up, I mean he would blend…so we used the back light to rim light that from, you with me? Am I making sense here? So, you understand?

PG: Yeah.

RP: It would hold light. Malcolm, June, myself were the only ones to do that. We'd go out and run a shot, say, Malcolm hold that light up there, well, they had lights, they'd put it above their lights and hold it for me, I'd do the same thing for them.

MG: I've had governors hold lights for me, I had congressmen hold lights for me, I've had superintendents of schools hold lights, really! (cross talk) You ever heard of Motherwedden? Of Hendersonville? He was ? Monroe?hold my light a lot

RP: good friend of mine

PG: He was also a photographer?

MG: He was a congressman from this district.

RP: Did you ever go up to his place on a picnic?

MG: I sure did.

RP: God, I used to go up there and the class that we went through…

MG: You're talking about where he had a lake?

RP: Yeah, and he'd have these, once a year, Harry Bloomberg was in the class, Monroe Redman was in the class and that real estate man, anyhow,

MG: Don Elias in it?

RP: No, Don Elias..s.

MG: You know that Don had a lot of ? with ? You knew that didn't you?

RP: No. but anywho, the class went through. Monroe Redman, Harry Bloomberg decided, and one of them would give a weekend party for the class. And we went down to Harry's place at Lake Lure, he had that big place down there, and we'd go down there, and we'd go to Monroe Redman's place once a year. So, anyhow, we had a good time doing that.

MG: You know Harry Bloomberg, I couldn't, when I retired, he called me up and he says, "That's terrible you're gone, you've got to write a book about your experiences," And coming from him that's something…

PG: I think a lot of us have been encouraging you to do that.

RP: Do you know where I met Harry? When we was kids, I lived on Chapel Avenue, he lived on the house going up Woodfin. First house on the left. And he and I used to get out there in the field and fight.

MG: Well, I didn't know him that far back.

RP: Well, I did. ? come on out to the house, I've got a deer, bison, or something out there, having a dinner

MG: Was his first place that place on Spruce St., was that his first garage or not?

PG: Market St.?

RP: Where he started his wrecker business?

MG: Well, no, what I'm talking about is ?

PG: Market

MG: Maybe it was on Market. Yeah. (cross talk)

PG: the one that had the roof that went

MG: I swear I don't remember, oh I saw it, but I just don't remember it. Then he moved across from

PG: It was across from

MG: Then he moved on Haywood St. and was there a long time. Now, some of the things that I did was of Harry Bloomberg, not with him, but I don't know whether you knew this or not, but they brought a thing in here one time that was an airplane car.

PG: No!

MG: That was about 35 – I did, 35 or 40 years ago. It landed at the airport.

PG: airplane car!

MG: and they folded the wings back and drove it into town. Now, it happens, this recently, by the way, Put, that I saw that same thing in popular science or popular mechanics, and they're talking about the same thing today, to solve our problems, our traffic problems. Now, another thing I shot with him, see now, Harry would bring all, he was a real far out guy. To bring these things to town. And he'll remember this, they had a Willis, I think it was a Willis, they'd go through water with it, you could go on water or land. You remember that thing? And they had it at Beaver Lake. And I mean, you went out on Beaver Lake and come right back up… and go on land. Know what I mean?

PG: that would be nice to have.

MG: How long ago do you figure that was? That's got to be 40 years too,

RP: …I drove one… I was eleven…not too far from here now, by the time the paper come out and got the picture of that car that went into Beaver Lake, he came down and saw the lake, come down Merrimon Avenue, come North to South, and driving, and seen that lake and …well, I'll just steer across the lake, and he drove off in there, and out the other side, and boy, they arrested that son of a gun, put him in jail.

PG: He drove across it?

RP: Yeah. Was it that shallow?

RP: Well, it was a car (interuption) and so he had been doing that all along, coming down from North.

PG: this is the boat car

MG: well, now you know the early Volkswagon, they swore it would float…

PG: they did say that, right

MG: I don't know whether they did or not (cross talk)

RP: come and get me I'm floating on the lake

MG: well, you didn't have any control

RP: it wouldn't sink

MG: I had two of those, I had two Beetles

PG: Of course, I drove them for years,

MG: I had a Fastback, too.

PG: I loved them.

RP: Yeah, June had one.

PG: It was a good photographer's car 'cause it would go in the snow

RP: You got that right now (cross talk)

MG: I tell you I went some places I could not believe

PG: You could park it real easy

RP: I couldn't haul what I hauled in a Volkswagon,

PG: So you took a lot with you

RP: I had that ? and I filled it full when I went out of town

MG: I had to haul managers in mine sometimes, the guy who was president of Citizen-Times and Culberson? To the airport.

PG: Well, tell me more about Johnny Jones

MG: Well, Johnny, as I said, he, I was his protégé, I guess, and he hired me, and he lived, I'll tell you, this, I told you this story, but he lived on Oakwood St. You know where Oakwood is? You do don't you? West Asheville, and it's a dead end street. Have I toldyou?

PG: I think you have.

MG: OK but it involved Westgate

PG: and I was interested in that because you were telling me how you took pictures over there

MG: Exactly, there was an exposure there, you know it was a quarry there before it was Westgate...

RP: You remember when I quit shooting aerial pictures, you know why? Well I, ...used to be in the army, a pilot, and he would take me up and I'd shoot pictures for Harry and Pearlman, and then Harrry ? at that garage out there on Patton Ave. and he wanted some land pictures, all this land taken, and he got Pearlman's boy, we went over Red, up there, ? airport,

MG: Lacy...?

PG: Mr. Bingham, did you know the Binghams?

RP: Yeah, Cam Bingham? Now, he was a good aerial man.

MG: Yeah, but he really wasn't involved commercial too much, but he just played around. (cross talk).

RP: He flew, and like to shoot aerial pictures, he bought an aerial camera and mounted it in his plane

PG: We have all his pictures at the library, they're amazing

MG: He lived in Biltmore Forest

PG: Did he?

MG: Oh, yeah, (cross talk) he may have sold some, but basically, it was a hobby.

PG: Were you flying out? I want to hear how you …

RP: I went out of, up there at Swannanoa. Red, somewhere, he had that airport. And we rode motorcycles together. And he got that plane, and picked me up down there on Amboy Rd. , (after the race, I guess). Doc Owens, you heard of him? (talk) there and parked my car, we got in the plane and left, and we went out, I forget, Black Mountain, or somewhere, bagged some shots, and coming back, the plane, I was in the front, and he was in the back, I had the door off, where I could shoot out the door,

MG: Now, you never want to shoot through the Plexiglass, well, it'll work, but not well,

RP: I had a rope around my waist and tied where I wouldn't fall out, and I'd stick my foot on the rudder,

MG: I have a picture of me

PG: You were hanging out of the plane

MG: I have a picture that I shot over West Asheville, with my foot on the rudder of a super Cub, that's right, my foot's showing, in fact I was shooting our church there.

PG: I'd like to see that

RP: I went ahead and I told him this thing is gonna burn up, it smells hot (the Plane?) Yeah, it don't smell hot to me, he said. I said, let's find out if it's got oil in it. And we went back to where Doc Owens was, and Doc examined it, got plenty of oil, I don't see nothing wrong with it, except, I tell you what, if the motor stops, just land in somebody's ? I said I don't want to do that. And so we went on up and went on over Patton Avenue, around, and God, it kept getting hotter and hotter, and we went out Sweeten Creek Road and I wanted to get the Western Carolina Equipment Company, tractor Co. and I got that, and we went on up there and landed, the next morning, the guy got in that plane, really didn't check the motor or nothing, took off up over the mountain, and burnt up.

PG: Oh gosh, you were lucky, that was it for you.

RP: And I says, no more for me.

MG: Let me tell you an aerial story. Now this is later times. We had a big flood in Asheville. When? Fifty something…

PG: Wasn't as big as that '16 one, but it was really bad…

MG: well, I don't know, (cross talk) The French Broad River in the Biltmore Estate was four or five miles across. It was a big flood. The viaduct, half of it was under water, OK, so Earl Freeman, you remember Earl Freeman? He was a pilot, by the way, but he was a reporter for the paper. And Earl, he flew for the CAP, too. So, they kept the plane at, gosh, what's the name of the place, Emma, Emma airport. OK. So, we had all this flood. It was still raining, so we decided we was going to make some aerial pictures of the flood. So, we go out to Emma, and he's flying something like a PT9P. I don't know, it was a CAP vehicle. And, Emma, there was a lady running that thing in those days, you know, well, anyway, she kept the pumps locked up when she wasn't there, which was most of the time. We got down there, and they checked the gasoline with a stick. ? And so we checked, and it showed nothing on the end of the stick, we couldn't get to the gas, well, Earl says, we'll fly out to, what's the name of the airport at Hendersonville, says we'll just fly up there and get some gas…

PG: On no gas!

MG: and so we take off. We shoot pictures along the Biltmore Estate going up there, and we get up there and guess what, it's under water. So, Earl looks back at me, and his eyes get, he's got big eyes, anyway, but he says, well, if I can get this thing up to about 10,000, I can glide into ?

PG: Is that what you did?

MG: That's what I did.

PG: That's scairy.

DP: He's the one that got killed.

MG: That's right. He got killed in a plane crash, if I'd a been here, I'd have a good chance…? (cross talk)

PG: What was his name?

DP: Helicoptor?

MG: It wasn't a helicoptor.

DP: I thought it was.

MG: It was an ? aura? Gyro style? It has wings and a lead? Boat. And Earl had taken that on to Selup? And he had a demonstrator. And he was ? the dealer around here for a while. And they were going to be the ? around here, because they could take off, in just a very short yard, and so Earl, anyway, what happened, now this is strictly a rumor, also, that he had worked on that plane the day before, and he had a big cotter key that held the motor in place, he didn't get it back right, and about a quarter of a mile west of the airport, they went down and Earl died.

PG: That's awful , and what was his last name?

MG: Earl Freeman And Earl, also, one time though, we had a realtor, was it a realtor? That disappeared. Couldn't find him any where.

PG: When would that have been?

MG: And Earl found him atop Sunset mountain up there, somewhere, in an offbeat place, and he had commited suicide. He found him from the air, now, Earl flew like that…I flew with Earl quite a bit.

RP: He was a good pilot.

MG: Well, he was a good pilot for Super Cubs, now other aircraft…

RP: He wasn't there

MG: He was OK, but not special. I flew with him in a plane called the Citabarca? You ever hear of the Citabarca? (No) That's acrabatic spelled backwards. And it was that type of aircraft somewhat, too, and it was great to shoot pictures out of because it was tandem, one-two. And I would ride in front, the pilot is supposed to ride in front, but I would ride in the front, and it had a window that you didn't have to take the door off, so there's a nice thing. Slide back, a sliding window, ? and that just puts you out over everything. Well, Earl and I were, you know the sewer processing plant down in Woodfin? They were building it, and I went up to shoot aerials of it with him, and we're over there, and I start to slide the window back, it left, the airplane, it took off. And, there was somebody else flying this, somebody from Lacey's place.

PG: Lacey Growth?

MG: Lacey ? By the way, I got a story, if I haven't told you about

PG: I don't think so

MG: Anyway, this guy was a pilot. Lacey was hard? On new people, you knew that. So, we followed it down, and it was in December, and it was just like a leaf that was floating, and it landed on the sand bar in the river, and it was frozen, you know, the sand bar was kind of, and this guy went down there and got that window and put it back in the airplane.

PG: You're kidding.

MG: So Lacey wouldn't know anything about it. Now, let me tell you about Lacey one time. One Sunday, and I don't know when, you remember that swinging bridge, of what Chief Sawnook? Fell.

DP: Yeah.

MG: It killed four people.

PG: Where was that?

MG: In Cherokee. OK

RP: They got out of step. You know you got to walk in step going across a swinging bridge.

MG: And it collapsed in the Oconaluftee River, and they hit rock.

PG: It fell?

MG: Yeah, It fell down.

RP: It broke the cable.

MG: It was on Sunday, well, I was scheduled to shoot aerials of Asheville-Weaverville from the air. Well, I went to the airport, and Lacey, we found out, so we decided to skip that and fly to Cherokee. Cause we knew we couldn't drive in there, traffics – two-lane traffic held up for five miles outside of Cherokee. So we flew in there. And right across, this on 441, the street from that bridge, there was a field there, and what you call cross logs, between the field and the road, they had trees in it, and we did ? down hill, and I went over and shot the pictures, and he couldn't get out with me in the plane, so…

PG: You had to get another way home.

MG: So, he took the film and they sent somebody from town to pick me up that night.

RP: Golly!

MG: did you know about that? And Lacey was the pilot.

PG: that's interesting.

RP: I remember when ? fell.

MG: And that's what happened. June will tell you about this one, too. We used to fly to all the ball games, at Chapel Hill, ? go to Duke, State, and Wake Forest? From there, I don't know. Anyway, and when we split to shoot pictures. Well, June and I, I don't know who else was in the plane, was coming back from down there, this was in December, early December, and we're coming through the Swannanoa Gap, and we're not very high above that, heavy cloud layer, and it's snowing, and we come up, Asheville's covered with clouds, and the airport is too, but we just get through, and about that time the clouds are breaking, this is old Asheville-Hendersonville airport, not the ?, and we made it and landed. We were doing some sweating.

PG: The weather can get pretty bad like that, when you're coming to the mountains.

MG: One time I was flying, June was too, he was with me, he'll remember that, we're flying down state to Chapel Hill, and it becomes heavily overcast, and the guy flying us, he says I know where I am, and we fly over this town, and it turned out to be ?, I knew ? I said that's ? He says, Gosh, we're supposed to be over Winston-Salem, and so forth.

PG: What cameras would you use up in the planes, what kind of cameras would you take with you.

RP: I used a 4 by 5. (cross talk)

MG: What I said about that, and I shot with a Graphic for 25 years, ? I'm the guy that said that.

PG: So they were good in the plane?

MG: And I still think I had something going…

RP: ? Speed graphic, mine never did flap? I mean if it had, I'd put cardboard around it.

MG: You're talking about using a rope to tie you in, I never did that, but I used a belt.

RP: Boy, I did. I was afraid of a belt.

MG: Talk about crazy stuff like that, do you remember when that Hughes helicoptor was based at Westgate for a while?

RP: Yeah.

MG: OK.

PG: What was that for? A demonstration?

MG: I don't know, there to take people up, I think, maybe to take people for rides. I'm not sure.

RP: I remember what they done.

MG: Anyway, I came down, they'd made arrangements for me to shoot some pictures from that thing, and it had two bubbles, one on each side, and you could take the bubbles off. Well, they took the bubbles off for the right side where I would be, and I was belted in, which put me ?, about off on zero. And we went up in the air, and got to 2 or 3 thousand feet. And gusts of wind you wouldn't believe. Riding that was like riding the pendalum on a clock. ? The nose would be pointed up and the rest of the aircraft would be going ?

PG: Oh, that's frightening.

MG: But we made it back. And half of me was off the thing.

RP: Half of you is off now.

MG: True, but well you can see why can't ;you, but anyway, that was the worse time I've ever had.

PG: very scairy,

MG: See, I, every ? or so, I shot most of the aerials,

RP: He shot my aerials for me.

MG: In fact, I shot almost all the aerials. And about those negatives I may give you, I hope to, (cross talk), half of them are aerials.

PG: Yeah, you said that,

MG: But I must tell you, and Put may not like this one, a lot of these were of Enka, I shot a lot of Enka stuff.

RP: Yeah,

PG: You did a lot of work for these larger corporations, did you do a lot of work for the tourist industry?

RP: I done Chamber ? shot, but not…

PG: Not too much?

RP: I tell you, tourists, they are like this, tourists, I hated them

PG: well, me too, ?

RP: Wait a minute now, I had a business, and I depended on industry …

MG: Industry, that was where the …?

RP: So, they come around, they got this industrial something or other , up at the Chamber of Commerce, and they wanted donations to get industry in here, the young guys did. So, they got rid of the older guys, and put younger guys in to work up some business. And that's what I was tickled to death. I think I give 'em $2000 on that.

MG: You know what he said about ?

RP: That put money in my pocket, it did.

MG: What's so funny, he said he hated tourists, well I hated weddings

RP: I did too

MG: the only reason I ever shot it was somebody that I knew real well

PG: they just talked you into it

MG: Yeah, but I ?

RP: Well, I didn't like weddings, I done weddings.

PG: I've done them ?, they scare me.

MG: They don't scare me, they're just a pain.

RP: I like the wedding gowns, I used to do 6 and 8 and 10 of them a day.

PG: So, they would come into your studio, well, that's different.

RP: and I hated weddings, you know, I had to do them. My business was …

MG: I had people come into the paper, the bosses, publishers and so forth, insisted that I shoot them for them.

RP: That's something, you remember, I better not say this.

PG: You want to pause it? Pause I turned this back on. I was curious about your photographs in Florida that you said you still have, is that of commercial work?

RP: That's commercial. That's Carolina Power and Light Company, a lot of stuff that I've done and I kept prints and negatives of that, and during what time I was working at plants, I'd be shooting their photography. Instead of going out and hiring a photographer, I talked them into letting me do it. And, anyhow I set my studio up in their plant. And that's the way I'd do that. And in the ship yard, I didn't get into that, cause they had five photographers working at the shipyard I was in… They didn't need nobody.

PG: Where's that? New Jersey?

RP: In Baltimore, and when I was at Clemson teaching, I done photography down there. Anything I could get

MG: ? do that for Clemson?

RP: Done it for myself

MG: OK

RP: I was just doing my business. I didn't know where I might land. And I wanted to know that I could do something. But when I finally settled down there back home, up there on Haywood St. where I decided…

MG: Did you ever know Eliot Lyman Fisher very well?

RP: Oh gosh, me and Eliot

MG: Do you know who I'm talking about?

PG: Yeah, I'd like to hear about…

RP: had a time together, the last time we got together, the Chamber of Commerce at Mrytle Beach. We stayed at that big old white hotel down there, and Lyman, he wanted me to go because he wanted to get his 8 by 10 camera, and he didn't want to fool with his 4 by 5, and I was doing stuff for the ? I couldn't tell from his 8 by 10's, but that was all right,

MG: I agree with you

RP: You know what I'm talking about.

MG: Exactly

RP: And, old Eliot, we had this room together, and he's going to do that night shot in that dining room at that hotel for 'em, so he done that and while he's there, I says I'm going to load film, man it was summertime in Mrytle Beach and you know how hot it is, I got in that little old dinky closet, me and them 8 by 10 film and 4 by 5 film, I wouldn't shoot a 35, it was too small, but anyhow, I got all the film unloaded and loaded, and then he come in and he says, Do you need some help? Oh, Man, if you could have got in that closet, I could have used some help. But it was so hot I couldn't believe it.

MG: You know, we did some strange things in those days, like that, right?

PG: Well I think Mr. Fisher, when George Masa died, I think he took his negatives

MG: You may be right.

PG: We're curious about that

RP: I think Fisher was a banker in Alaska. And he got onto the Chamber of Commerce, let him get on the boat and do the Chamber of Commerce travel pictures, and he done some beautiful stuff up there…

MG: He really did.

RP: I was right across the hall from Fisher, his studio was at one end, and he didn't shoot nothing in the studio…

PG: Right, Haywood Street?

RP: Haywood St., up there 56 I guess it is, upstairs there, in the Castenada Building, so I was the first door on the left, on the right of him, went down the hall to his studio. And we worked together on stuff he had to shoot, and I'd go with him, then he'd send me places that he didn't want to go, and he used 4 by 5, and he didn't want to do that…

PG: He liked his 8 by 10

RP: Everybody's got their own, now the first camera I owned was an 8 by 10. That's where I started shooting pictures, sure that was a big old film.

MG: Pain in the …

RP: Right.

MG: Talking about photographers, old timers, and I can't come up with the name, and maybe you can. There was a guy and he lives on, what's the street going up to Grove Park Inn

PG: Macon Avenue?

RP: Lyle Henderson?

MG: Right, Lyle Henderson. That's who I was trying to remember. Do you know about him?

PG: Not much.

MG: On Macon. And he was a real shy kind of guy.

RP: Well, no, I know Lyle. You remember the time I got all the photographers together, for a meeting, down at ?, June shot our pictures, and she seen it the other day,

PG: We have the picture

RP: So, anyhow, Lyle, you could be on Bon Marche side, and him on Ivey's side, walking up the street or meeting each other, he'd turn and go the other way. (cross talk) He was afraid somebody'd see what he was doing.

MG: Now, his wife did all the operations. She ran all the financial… he did the shooting.

PG: Processing and shooting

RP: Markam

PG: What did he specialize in?

MG: He shot a lot of the groups and things

RP: Who?

MG: Lyle

RP: He shot portraits.

MG: Yeah, that's right.

RP: He didn't shoot groups, he would go out and shoot…

MG: Yeah, you're right.

PG: Now, was he in business when Mr. Brock was in business.

MG: No, no no

RP: Yeah, wait a minute and I'll tell you

MG: He was that far back?

RP: Brock, Mrs. Williams at Shield's Studio, Lyle Henderson,

PG: What studio?

RP: ? out to Brock, and got him to show him how to shoot…

PG: So Brock taught Lyle Henderson and what was her name?

RP: Williams,

MG: What was her first name?

PG: Rose Williams.

MG: I tell you what she could do, she was the best retoucher I ever saw. Good, superb…Now do you know how? That's a very critical thing.

PG: I know that's a fine art

MG: And she retouched negatives, Juanita Shope was telling us, she …

MG: And she ? …at the paper, if we had one of the wheels there that we had to make a picture of, and they wanted it re…, and we sent it to her. She changed… it was cheap, though, really cheap.

RP: Well, it was 50 cents, went up to…

MG: That's right

RP: and Juanita was charging…?

MG: But she ? But Juanita wasn't in the same class as her

RP: Oh no, huh uh. Lyle Henderson was.

PG: Where was her studio?

MG: It was on Patton Avenue.

RP: No, across the street from me, on Haywood St., in the Haywood Building.

PG: And so you would take your negatives over to her, give them to her, and she would just know what to do with them?

RP: Yeah

PG: And when would you pick them up, how long did it take her to do that?

RP: Sometimes I'd wait on them.

PG: Oh, really.

MG: I tell you, she did, it looked like thousands of little etchings. And what she was doing, how she knew, I'm not sure

RP: Huh? How'd she know? Well, there's certain lines you take out of people's faces, and lines you don't.

PG: So, she knew which ones to take out.

MG: She could take a bad looking face, and smooth it…

RP: ? bumps all over his face, Juanita can't do it…

PG: Juanita told me a wonderful story, she said she took a high school student, who had

MG: Bad skin,

PG: Well, no, she had an actual physical deformation in her face, and she retouched her photo, and submitted it to a contest, and the young woman won the beauty queen prize, and everybody was real mad of course the young woman was very proud.

MG: There's this woman, Miss Rose Williams, was the best I ever saw. Really, she was pretty incredible.

PG: So Brock taught them, do you think?

MG: Did Brock teach her?

RP: Yeah, all that cotton-pickin retouching, yes sir.

PG: Cause he really knew all about that too.

RP: Who?

PG: Mr. Brock.

RP: Mr. Brock come over here from somewhere. He…

MG: By the time I knew Brock, his hand was too shaky…

RP: And he drank all the time.

MG: That's it.

PG: He was quite an eccentric

RP: ? Shields, what Ms. Williams would do, and Lyle, the old man laid drunk, and sloppy,

MG: He smelled!

RP: brought him suits of clothes, food, and he lived in a little old room up there on the Square,

PG: He lived there?

END OF TAPE 1

PG: I was saying I get confused about Plateau Studios, 'cause so many people seemed to have worked right there at that one place, so can you tell me what you knew about that? You said Brock stayed up there sometimes.

RP: Brock had it first, Ball got it next.

PG: Mr. George Masa had it and so did Mr. Pelton for a brief period of time.

MG: Now, I may have told you this, did you know that in the earlier days, Citizen Times didn't have any photography. They contracted out to Plateau Studios.

PG: So Plateau Studios was their main contract?

MG: You mean Citizen Times? I guess they did everything else, I don't know.

RP: Paul was up there then.

MG: Right, Paul was there. They had a contract for like three bucks an assignment. Or maybe it was less than that. Do you remember? It was real cheap.

PG: Did you say Mr. Brock actually, did he work there too? Did he, who started Plateau?

RP: Brock run that studio.

PG: Did he start it? Did he name it?

RP: I think Brock started that studio. Then Paul got it from Brock.

MG: Actually, I think it just floated across, there wasn't really a straight

PG: There was? In between. Did you know anything about Edwin Pepper? Because we have his name on the Plateau Studios as well.

MG: really? I never heard that name

RP: before my time

PG: Then Mr. Ball did get it in 1922.

RP: Well, he might have, you don't know what year do you?

PG: Well, it was before, I have a list at the library, because George Masa did have it for a while, and then Edwin Pepper bought it from George Masa, I believe,

RP: now, that's one thing I never heard

MG: I never heard that either

PG: Then I think Mr. Ball, bought, he was only on the books for one year, see we're looking in the city directories, trying to figure out who's involved in the businesses, and sometimes it's pretty …

RP: is Ray's studio listed there?

PG: Ray's studio is in our city directory. Do you know anything about them?

RP: Mizz Ray…

PG: What was her first name? I forget but do you remember her?

RP: I don't know her first name, I was real young then, but my Daddy used to work on her car, he was a mechanic. And she bought a car where he worked, and he worked on her car, that's where I got to know her, 'cause I went up there to deliver her car one day, anyhow, Mizz Ray, you might see her sober, you might see her drunk, you didn't know how to catch her. She stayed up there until she died.

PG: Now, where are you talking about, up there? Did she

RP: Up there on the Square, on the end, as you go down Broadway, where Broadway starts, is on this corner building, their ? was uptown

MG: Is that where the parking garage is now? The Langren Hotel …

RP: No, I'm talking about up on the Square, you come down, you know the fountain's here, and I don't know, the statue's there where…monument, then the buildings come down, you know where the fish market, Katy's coffee company, she was upstairs

PG: Is that on Biltmore Avenue?

MG: No, he talking

PG: the other way

RP: might be going North, right on the Square, up at the top, now their picture, it said Ray's Studio,

PG: We have those.

RP: Yeah, so I remember where it was very plainly.

PG: So, you'd go up there. Did she live there?

RP: No.

PG: OK, but you'd go see her there?

RP: We'd go up there, maybe she'd be working half drunk, she was a alcoholic. And best I can tell, or remember it now, she acted like an alcoholic to me. Anyhow, she stayed up there for a long time, until she

either died or moved out, I don't know what it was. Now ? Howard, that's what it was, Howard's Studio it was upstairs close to where you went across Patton Avenue on a bridge, from the theatre, I think it was, theatre was up there, they tore that down, I don't know what year. She moved from up there to on Haywood St. And that's where I got him. I bought her studio.

PG: You bought her studio. So what all kind of equipment did you get when you bought that, it that where you got the 8 by 10 camera?

RP: Only thing I got is the studio camera, her lights, her darkroom, all of her printing equipment, and that's all she had, that's all a portrait photographer, she wouldn't go out.

PG: What kind of camera was that?

RP: It was a regular old Century studio zip? Camera. Great big thing. I got rid of that.

MG: Talk about old camera, you remember the graflexes?

PG: You know what a Graflex is?

PG: I know about them

RP: I owned one of them

PG: I want you to teach me how to use one of those

MG: They have a high ? you look down through, like this

RP: That was a good camera

MG: I've got an almost new Rollei, that I got, did you know that?

RP: Yeah, no

MG: Well I have it and I shot one roll of film

PG: Is that twin lens?

MG: Twin lens, German. Now, that began to supercede the Graflex, in the news…

PG: 'Cause it was a little smaller

MG: in the news area

PG: Takes 120 film

MG: that's right, I have to tell you, now you mentioned the 4 by 5 versus the 8 by 10, there wasn't a heck of a lot of difference between the 2 ¼, that Rollei, and the 4 by 5.

PG: But you could roll the film through, you weren't dealing piece by piece…

MG: the really problem, there was no interchangeable lenses, that's what killed…

PG: It didn't have that.

RP: You know, no revolving back

PG: On your speed Graflex you had that?

MG: You had revolving backs, and you also had 3 or 4 different lenses

PG: Would they just snap on and off?

MG: On a little board, and that thing clamped, cross slide, gosh I wish I had gotten my graphic when I left there.

PG: So which lenses did you carry with you?

MG: With the…none. With the Graphic 5 ¼, 6 inch lens, but at the paper we used all five ¼, I believe, which is a semi wide angle.

PG: What did that translate into, about a 35mm wide?

MG: She's not competing here now. You understand?

PG: See, I learned it after, later…

MG: No

PG: where we had the 28 mm…

MG: OK

RP: I've got a 28 on my 35.

MG: I've got a 24-40 zoom, by the way,

PG: right…

MG: You ever heard of one of those?

RP: widest I got is a 28.

MG: 24-40! That I shoot a lot by the way when I travel

PG: Now, how did those Graflex lenses compare to

MG: OK a 5 ¼ would have been the equivalent roughly, I'm just, come with me on that, a 38.

RP: Just about.

MG: I'm pretty close, a 38 on a 35.

PG: So when you need to get up close to somebody, you just walked right up to them, I guess, right?

MG: No, no, that leans on the Graphix, see, you had thebellows and everything, and you could come right up to here, all you had to do was open up the back and focus it, you couldn't focus it with range finder

PG: right

MG: Let me tell you, when I first went to work for the paper, they had 3 graphics, something like that, and I was low man on the totem pole, and I got the one that the range finder wouldn't work. For at least a year, I shot guess focus, on a 5 ¼ inch lens, and that's doing pretty good.

PG: You just estimate your distance?

RP: Well, you could set that thing on six feet, it would travel out there if you stopped down about 16,

MG: Yeah, if you stopped down about 16, if!

PG: has to be pretty good lighting

MG: Still, that picture you saw on the wall, let me tell you…he should see that.

PG: Ah, that's a beautiful picture, and we should have brought that one.

MG: that was shot at about F16, by the way.

PG: You're kidding?

MG: No.

PG: Because you were on a tripod?

MG: You got it, here we get into it. I've got this picture, and it is pretty good, it was made of a street sweeper, on Patton Avenue, after they had wet the streets down, you know how they would do, 11:30 AM in the morning, and get everything all wet because it was shot off a tripod, and it was shot at maybe 2 or 3 seconds, with a flash floor? Lamp

PG: Oh, it did have a flash…

MG: You got it

PG: So that made him more solid on the picture

MG: Not too much, he had to hold still,

PG: he still had to hold still

MG: and he did a pretty good job (laughter) You guys, I'd like you to see that thing, I really would. Have you seen that?

RP: I've seen it.

PG: Well, he won an award for that, in '52 he said.

RP: Boy, I'm telling you

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RP: I've seen it.

PG: Well, he won an award for that, in '52 he said.

RP: Boy, I'm telling you

MG: it showed the street and everything all the way up to ?

RP: I tell you, you could set that thing on a certain amount of feet, especially when you went towards a wide angle.

MG: the whole thing was if you could get to 16, just like he said, 11 wasn't too bad, or maybe he got to 8, forget it

PG: it cuts it down pretty fast

RP: wide angle on my 35, that son of a gun, you set it at 6 feet, it's sharp from your feet straight on out to infinity

MG: this 24-40, I can set that thing on 10 feet, I can shoot just about anything going, forget the distance.

RP: That 28 of mine, on that 35, I had two bags, you know interchangeable bags, and I never used them, they're still in those cartons they come in, and when they robbed me, they took those two bags, why I don't know, they thought it was something, I happened to have my 35 with me, so, they got them, and I kept hunting for somebody who didn't know what those things were, and didn't know how to use them on, and it's a Konrex? What I got, and that's a good camera boy. That's the only camera I've saved.

MG: Talk about photographers who're still living who've been doing it for a long time and are good, not commercial, is Hugh Morton.

PG: He is really good. I don't know him, but I know his work.

MG: June and I both know Hugh real well. In fact we were at, you know, they just opened a new bridge

PG: Did you go up for that?

MG: Yeah, we were guests up there, June and I, and

PG: He's done work for a long time

MG: and he shoots beautiful stuff, I mean absolutely, but the ?, he can wait all day, we couldn't. But he is good, I also can tell you, Hugh has been president of the Press Photographers, even though he is never a working press photographer.

PG: Did he turn over so many pictures to the press

MG: Well, incidentally, what is, you know the Atlas books for Atlas that published, they're on the newstands kind of

PG: What would that be? It's an Atlas?

MG: It's like that, anyway, he just recently had a pictures of Grandfather Mountain, it was absolutely superb.

RP: He knows Grandfather Mountain

PG: I've seen some beautiful stuff, ? a color photographer, too.

MG: Well, Hugh's got a lot of money

PG: Well, how did he learn photography, do you know?

MG: How did he learn photography? I don't know. Just associating with the press photography basically

PG: Just hanging out with you

MG: We used to have short courses at Chapel Hill

PG: Did you go to any of those?

RP: Hugh would get in on that

MG: Hugh, actually, I believe the first one, he was master of ceremonies, and basically ramroded ? at Chapel Hill

PG: Central to it.

MG: at the University of North Carolina

PG: and those were designed for press photographers?

MG: only

PG: OK

MG: But see, there was a thing going on, a lot of the press photographers resented Hugh, because he was not a press photographer, and yet here he was…

PG: ? a weight in the organization

MG: He had that thing every fall at Grandfather Mountain, you know, camera clinic.

PG: He still has that?

MG: And incidentally, I was the first, that year, I won, I was the seventh ? for the year, for the short course, and spoke

PG: and you came to dinner at the Grove…

MG: fifty years ago

PG: maybe it's time for a reunion

RP: he was kind of sharp fifty years ago

MG: that's basically true, I try to stay out of it now, by the way,

PG: I don't think he's very successful

MG: People drive me crazy, now I've got a lot of stuff shot overseas, a lot.

PG: You do? Oh, from your travels

MG: I've got pictures shot of the Coliseum, shot with that 24-40, that's so forth, I've got stuff of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia, I wish you could see

PG: Well, I've been working on some Russian ? photography

MG: the Hermitage, that's probably the most arty building in the world

PG: it's up there, yeah.

MG: the winter palace of ?

PG: Is it in Moscow?

MG: It's in St. Petersburg. Now the Louvre's got great pictures in it, I've shot stuff there, too. You've been there haven't you?

PG: No, I want to go, but I haven't.

MG: But the Hermitage not only has all the art stuff, but the building itself…

PG: it's a work of art

MG: I mean it's got shimmering, it's got gold leaf, it's got, I don't know why the Russians, they've been starving, why they don't take that thing

PG: and slice it up

MG: and feed their people

RP: not going to do that

MG: they've got carriages, horse driven carriages, jeweled and ? and stuff, it's just…

PG: Well, the job I have now at the library of congress, I'm working with glass plates by a Russian photographer that were taken in 1909 to 1915, and that was Czarist Russia before the revolution, and half of them are countryside pictures and just gorgeous things, and real interesting just how the people lived, and then a lot of them are of this gilt wealth that the Czar had, I guess, and the palaces and and the ? robes and the crown

MG: By the way, in each room in the Hermitage, they had these women, that were 5 by 5, and they all called them Commisars. And you know me, here I go ?, in this group I'm with, I circled on ahead of them to shoot pictures of them at things, and I would get tired, and they had these straight chairs, that were heirlooms to say the least, and I asked the Commisar if I could sit ?, and they let me sit on 'em, and they were probably 5? Years old

PG: Didn't get any pictures of you on them

MG: No, no, no, but they let me do it.

PG: That sounds fun, really does

MG: by the way, we're getting off here,

PG: Well, I'll bring you back on track, we're on our second side

MG: in the hotels in Russia, they had a key lady, with a desk, at the elevator or whatever, in every hotel, and you had to turn your key in to them when you went out

PG: As you came or went each time

MG: Yeah, it was a burglery safe

PG: It was security, yeah

MG: good idea really

PG: Did you travel around much and take pictures? What were your favorite places?

RP: I didn't travel like he's talking about, I mean I traveled in buses around the country

PG: You were on assignment

RP: yeah, I didn't get to travel like he did, I had kids to raise,

MG: Well, so did I, are you kidding, I had more than you had

RP: Did you say you was on a salary

MG: Yeah, I was on a salary, and I got a pension, so get out of here

PG: Did you do extra work, Malcolm? Did you work for yourself, too?

MG: Yes, I did. No, that shot those aerials for ?

PG: It must get a little tricky to piece together a photography business in Asheville. Borderline, it's a good life, but it can be quite tricky.

MG: It's kind of paying tribute to people like him, when you go in an industrial plant, with variations of lighting, particularly when you got into color, drive you crazy, you with me? Flourescence. Pssst! There's no way to filter those things accurately

RP: Yeah,

PG: What did you find worked best?

RP: I had I bet you a meter, I had a color meter, that told you what filter to use, and that's what I used

MG: Sure, what happened is a lots of times, you were shooting film that you wanted to get the ?, slow, 50, and by the time you put those filters on there, you're down to nothing.

RP: Well, now, wait a minute.

PG: So, you don't have any…

RP: Reciprocity there

MG: Yeah, that's another thing, you ever heard of reciprocity?

PG: I have.

RP: ? that in your head, don't go out and shoot slow pictures, not with color, you can with black and white to a certain extent, but I tell you, I was trying to explain simple language, reciprocity, the longer you expose a film, the slower it gets, you know what I mean.

PG: right. There's a law of diminishing return there

RP: right, the speed on it diminishes, and then it doesn't distort it, anyhow, you think, well God I'm overexposing that thing, but you're not, you use your color meter, I guess I've got an ? color meter

MG: well, we have them…

RP: Well, I had all these filters and I'd go to different plants, and they would use different flourescent tubes. Well, you'd go, like a window picture, it's got all kinds of lights in it, right, now shoot window pictures, you could meter that thing ?, tell you what kind of correct shutter to use, and then you'd have to expose it longer, so I'd pull my slip and add my reciprocity chart on it, I had charts, I had everything to go with what I got up, and I got that all together, and I went, Kodak's, when they first came out with everybody shoot their own color and process it and all that, invited me down to Atlanta, that week long thing down there, old ? Gerald Lowry, their traveling man, he'd gone down there, he said, You know you ? I says I'd like to know what you can do with it, and so I did.

PG: Was it Polaroid?

RP: No, it was color film, yeah.

PG: Was it Ektachrome? not transparency?

RP: No, like you print your own picture

PG: C-41?

MG: dye transfer

PG: dye transfer

RP: No, it wasn't dye transfer, regular, you put your filters in your enlarger, and expose on your paper, and process it.

MG: Now, he's covering a couple of things that I want to go.. No. 1 is in my opinion, and I think he would agree, good black and white is tougher to shoot than color.

RP: I'd rather have a good black and white, than I had a color print, there's more color in a black and white, if you do it right, he'll tell you

MG: Now, industrial shooting like he's talking about, gets into such complexity, it's hardly worth fighting, isn't it? You agree with me?

PG: Well, do they mostly want you to shoot black and white or color inside these plants.

RP: both, you might as well carry ? 8 by 10 and color film, and I'd take black and white and color, from 4 by 5 up to 5 by 7, 8 by 10.

MG: ? want to go crazy, is to shoot color and black and white side by side. Drive you nuts.

PG: Yeah, that would be hard to do.

MG: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to

RP: No

PG: That's all right, that's interesting, very interesting.

RP: ? won't believe me, but did you know that there's not a photographer operating a studio that can make a print to save your life. I bet you a dollar on that.

PG: right now?

MG: Yes, he's dead right.

PG: I have to say that

RP: they'll ship it out

PG: well, I have a few friends that you'd both love to meet. I'll have to give them some credit, there's a man named Jay Weiland, who's an architectural photographer, top notch. John Warner, do you know him?

MG: I know of John

PG: Then I have another friend named Benjamin Porter, who works mostly in black and white, and there are a few in my age group, that I'll have to say, and now Paul Brezny knows his work, you know Paul Brezny?

RP: I don't know

MG: I do, very well, and his wife,

PG: Now, I interviewed Paul and he's done a lot of work, you know what, he's retired

MG: Well, Paul may know more than he used to, but he didn't use to know that much, I got to tell you.

PG: Well, he picked it up, I'm sure, but there are, I don't know that the difference is though that most of...

MG: There's a guy had a place on Charlotte St.

PG: Tim Barnwell, Tim also knows his stuff

MG: Tim, now he knew his stuff, he doesn't still have his place?

PG: and he still does. Tim Barnwell has a place at the corner of Coxe Avenue down near Five Points...he's quite busy

MG: Well, one reason I asked you, I don't have a darkroom at home, and I'd love to rent? One, but can, I mean he used to have a deal where you can go in there and print your own stuff

PG: Well, he doesn't run workshops

MG: too bad

PG: he doesn't have that, I don't know anywhere in town where you can do that

MG: he used to have that on Charlotte St.

RP: there don't anybody do that now

MG: I don't blame 'em.

PG: he had wonderful workshops there. And he brought some really famous photographers in to teach them, and then you could rent a darkroom, yeah, he did that for about ten years.

RP: Malcolm and June though have been in my studio. Yeah, I tell you, you can almost eat off the floor in my darkroom.

PG: that's a good way to keep a darkroom, that's the only way ? can run

MG: But now this wasn't true of all photographers

PG: Oh, I know

MG: the sloppiest people I ever saw

RP: Now in Texas when I went out there, a guy wanted me to go to work for him, and I didn't want to go back to work, but anyhow, I went and visited him, first thing I done, I went in the darkroom, and I told him I wasn't interested. Man, that was the filthiest darkroom, and every one of them I went in, even the guys at the association, they got the filthiest darkrooms, why I don't know

MG: well you know we had a pretty neat one at C-T

RP: Well, I know that, I'm talking about general speaking of darkrooms, and then the girl's photography here in town, oh, she had the filthiest …

MG: You talking about Juanita?

RP: Yeah uh

MG: I don't think I was ever in her darkroom

RP: You wasn't? I used to visit her, I bought the first enlarger I bought, and I wanted a 4 by 5 enlarger, and her Daddy had one, I went up to the arcade and got it…

PG: Did you know her father pretty well? Tell me more about him, I've met her brother, and he told me a little about him, but,

RP: Oh yeah, he was what I'd say a fair photographer.

MG: That's Juanita's Daddy?

RP: Yeah, he done pretty good work, I always thought it was pretty good. I was in Greenville, South Carolina, then, and he brought that thing down there, that 4 by 5 enlarger ? and I wanted the two of them because I was doing some snapshots of stuff, and then making proofs off of them, anyhow, then Juanita, it's kind of funny about her, she come in from school, I told her Daddy, her Daddy'd go out, and she'd finish printing those little old snapshots they were runnning, and they done color, I mean photo finishing a lot, too, and she was running that, and she smoked, and her Daddy didn't know it. And I never had a cigarette in my mouth,

MG: in a darkroom, that's a terrible thing

PG: that's dangerous, it wouldn't be good

MG: the crap floating around

RP: her Daddy come in the front door and she heard him, and she said here and stuck that thing in my mouth, and I said what're you doing? She said, take that thing, my Daddy'll kill me, And I said, why? Why are you smoking? I said, well, don't he know it? She said, No. I take it out of my mouth and have it in my fingers, and he come in, and he didn't say nothing, but he seen what was going on. So I dumped the thing, and said don't never do that no more. I guess that's the first and last cigarette I ever had in my mouth.

PG: good for you

RP: golly, dang!

PG: Did you know a man named Blake Creasman?

RP: Blake Creasman? What did he do?

PG: Well, I think he was a photographer worked with George Masa for a while, and then he kind of quit, I think during the depression, maybe they went out of business, and George Masa died in '33and after that I don't think he did any work. He did for a while before that. And I didn't know, I haven't talked to anybody who knew of him, I talked to his sister

RP: I had talked to Masa, this guy that knew him, got me started in photography.

MG: Who was that?

RP: Oh, Leon Scott. He on Broadway, down there, right below, that street that comes down in to lower end of Broadway, going down there by that grocery store

PG: Hillside?

MG: ? trader?

RP: right below there he had ? and he was a friend of mine, he lived close to me, that's when I was growing up, and that's where I got to running film, and making a print or two, and then I'd quit.

PG: So he taught it to you? Did he teach you the basics?

RP: He taught me like I said on that last tape?, he taught me how to run film and how to print, make a print or two, and he said you dun all right, you're on your own, and I used to shoot groups for him, we did high school stuff.

PG: Do you think he knew George Masa?

RP: He did know him, but he's been dead so long

MG: One thing I'd like to discuss with you, my feeling about photography, this is, that you can learn all the technical stuff in the world, but you still don't know photography. You don't know photography, you're got to have a natural instinctive touch for it, you've got to think about things, now, I have two things still going, when I walk in a room, and I bet he'll go with me on this, I start thinking what will a picture do in this room, you with me?

RP: You got to.

MG: Grove Park Inn started me (laughter) That's one of the worst places in the world

PG: Those are gigantic rooms

RP: That's the worst place in the world to shoot.

PG: But how did you light it up?

MG: but anyway, what I say is, you've got to have a natural touch, going to school, learning the technique & stuff, is crap

RP: these guys amuse me, they go to conventions, OK I went to all of them, to learn something, they'd pass on what these guys had showed them, and I wanted this I done, not what he done, what I want

MG: exactly, you understand?

PG: Yeah

RP: If, don't, I disagree with all that stuff of going to these schools, it's all right to take a short cut, but you don't get nothing in your head, well I mean you haven't got that…

MG: well, it's nice to have that, but, you may go through and you may become great, but you didn't get it from that, it's either in you or it isn't.

RP: Well, you remember when they first started to ? Grove Park Inn, and all those rock pillars in there, well, I was shooting out there then, I'd done interiors, all that stuff you know, and they'd start building on,

I'd shoot that, but their rooms had that old furniture in it, and all that stuff, and all that wicker stuff, and when they tore that rock off there, they ruined Grove Park Inn

PG: I think so, too, we've seen those pictures

MG: I think so too, I agree.

PG: It's awful, did they actually take some of the rocks off the pillars, or did they just cover it over…

RP: They just stripped it down to the steel

PG: a tragedy

MG: I know the thing that happened, you could walk in some places, if they're old, well, for instance the church that we have, they eat light up, they eat it up

RP: just soaks it in, it don't travel, you don't bounce light

PG: I've had a lot of problems trying to shoot …, I know that sometimes, you've mastered it (cross talk)

MG: I don't know if anyone ever completed those, but we're on the right track

RP: Well, I used to enjoy one thing, take the Holiday Inn, it's on Patton Avenue, ? , I was going to work for them up on Tunnel Road,

MG: was that McCulloch?

RP: Yeah, McCulloch? And I went out to this new place, and, Malcolm, it had a big room, I'd want all that, and then they had down the hall, it had rooms that opened up, I set lights up in them rooms, it looked like the door would open and lights would come out in the hall, and everything was lit up.

PG: Now, those were stationary lights that were just on all the time

RP: No, a lot of them were that flash we've been talking about, where, trigger lights,? It didn't go off, …bounced light, would kick that thing off, it was open flash, if you know what I'm talking about, and ? keep my camera light,

MG: you do know, for instance at night, you can set up our here, set your camera, open it up, and go out there and paint light, now to some degree that's what happened on that picture, you saw there.

PG: Did you go down that street?

MG: No, I did not, but I just used the one kick in there, but still it's on the side of that, you know what I mean, you could do that.

RP: You remember the old Battery Park?, I'm … the old one, I mean …? Restaurant

PG: George Vanderbilt?

MG: You mean before this one was built?

RP: No, OK, well, they wanted an interior of that thing, nobody in it, well

MG: that's fine if there's nobody in it

RP: 2 or 3 l'clock in the morning, my wife and I went up there and I said now you, when I hollar open the camera, you take that shutter open, and I'll shoot a flash, and then you can let it loose, and I go over there and paint light,

MG: with a speed Graphic, what you could do if you had two people, is take the slide out, and just hold it in front of the lens, and somebody walk around and say "Open", close, and not touch the shutter on the camera, all you do is hold the black slide in front of it

RP: I can do that on that 8 by 10

MG: well, I've never tried it, of course, I've never shot an 8 by 10, but with the graphic, you could do that. I shot a lot of stuff this, yeah,

PG: would you do that, would you walk around? No, you ? the camera

MG: No, no, no. (cross talk)

RP: You can walk around if there's a little bitty ? light and paint it with a ?

MG: He just said a key thing there, if the room doesn't have too much light.

PG: Or it'll get you walking around

RP: You can open the shutter, set your, and just take a regular light, not a flash, regular light, ? everything else, and keep walking, you'll never be in that picture

MG: something we used to do, later in times coming?, we had strobes, that would fire photoelectrically, at the paper, and the old city auditorium, we'd set three or four of those up around, and shoot basketball, and man it looked superb

RP: You wouldn't ? that after so long a time. ?

MG: and another thing was we had one hanging up on the balcony for instance. And somebody would come along and knock it down, that wasn't cheap, see, ? the cuff after that, but I've been to basketball games when I had one sitting out here on the edge of the floor shooting and shooting the light on the camera, and the things ? would stop? Somebody would walk along and knock the thing down, break that glass, you know, break glass all over the floor, it's actually embarrassing, now, there's one other thing I want to get to here, if I may, and that is, in news photography, probably more true than any others, but somewhat in yours too, wasn't near all the technical stuff, it was how you dealt with people

RP: Oh, you had to deal with people

PG: that's a hard part

MG: You had to be the arranger, you couldn't say, "Well I just don't know what to do with it" You know what I mean, you had to say I want you to do so and so

PG: Now I remember you taking pictures when I was a child, and I remember how you could work the crowd.

RP: Now convention work is like that

MG: but I think news photography maybe had a little more of that, I'll never forget this, I may have told you this, ...I was making a picture at the old Battery Park there, and there was this couple that obviously reeked of money, you know, you've seen the type, and she was one of these, you know boy, and I'm setting them up and I'm bringing them close together you know and maybe him across her shoulder or whatever

you know, and so by the way, also working on time frame, having to hurry, you didn't have as much of that as I did, anyway, I was shooting this couple like that at the Old Battery Park and I was ? time wise and this woman says "Well, young man, that's not the way the New York Times would do it." And I said, "Well, this is not the New York Times, this is the Asheville Times." She went down to see Mr. Bennell about it.

PG: Didn't like that. She was used to her New York Times

RP: She was training you

MG: But now I had a lot of that happen, and I had people come in and try to beat me up a couple of times.

PG: You told me a story I didn't get on tape last time that I'd like you to tell me again on tape, because this is very interesting, but you talked about having some rocks thrown at you, because of a union protest...

RP: You may remember that, Asheville Mica Plant strike, before the ? that was before the war.

PG: Were you there too? Can you tell me this story, I want to get this on the tape.

MG: OK, that was a very bitter strike, and it went on for two or three years.

PG: What year are we talking about?

MG: Was that '38? '39?

RP: '38 I think.

MG: OK, and it went on for a long time and man those people were dirt poor in that strike, right?

RP: yeah

PG: this is the Mica plant?

MG: that's on the Swannanoa River Road, there, you know where old Hoyle's? used to be, and it was sandwiched between two tobacco warehouses. Right, you got me? Well, we went on the one that was on the left side, you remember Doug Brookshire by any chance?

RP: yeah,

MG: Doug Brookshire, now he was a reporter, I was a photographer,

RP: ?

MG: Well, we decided it would be nice, and this is always true, to make an overhead shot of the crowd, so we go up there, and they throwed bottles and rocks at us, they break his glasses,

PG: pretty serious

MG: and I'm shooting away while this is going on, they're still throwing at me, and I, Lawrence Brown, you've heard of, the old time Sheriff around here, he started arresting them, and he arrested five of them, and the girl, there was four men and a girl, he arrested, she only weighed 95 or 100 pounds, but she wrapped herself around him as he arrested, and kicked the living daylights out of him, and she ended up getting six months for that, but now later on, I was walking down Biltmore Avenue, before this trial came up on these people, these two boys walked up beside me and they had knives in their hands, and they said, "We're going to get you if you testify in that trial," and I said, "Well, all I can say is they threw rocks at, I don't know who they were." And they never bothered me, they also threatened to throw me in the River

down there, and I made a picture of the lady sitting there, an old lady maybe 80, 85, around the fire. They kept, it was cold,

PG: Did you go photograph this, too?

RP: I done several strikes

MG: I made a picture of this old lady sitting there, by this fire, and they got upset about that, they said if that comes out in the paper, we're going to get you, and we carried it in the paper and we said that in the cut line,

RP: What kind of other strikes did you?

MG: I shot an Enka strike one time, did you shoot?

RP: I didn't go out there.

MG: at midnight one time, have I told you?

PG: No.

MG: I don't know, we had a reporter named Carl Flemming, and he later, do you remember Carl?

RP: Yeah (whisper)

PG: I don't think we got that.

MG: Anyway, he came from Raleigh and he worked in sports for a while, maybe he worked in general news, anyway, Carl and I went out there to cover that about midnight, got out there, and they were drunk, most of them, and it was a light rain falling, I mean it was cold out, rain, too, and Carl, this is the way things changed, invited them to turn my car over, so that would make an exciting news story, and stuff like that, there's quite a few things like that

PG: it doesn't sound like all your work was fun

MG: and Carl went to Atlanta, working for Newsweek, after that, and I've never taken Newsweek and I've never had any use for them, but Carl was the kind of a guy, ? (cross talk) so, that they would hire him, you know.

PG: but did you ever get in any situaitons where you just refused to take pictures?

RP: No, you don't do that.

MG: I did. I did a few times.

RP: I hate to do that.

MG: I can't really, but that happened.

PG: You just felt like...

MG: I mean, I just walked away, another time, talk about people try to beat you up, I had about six assignments in one hour, all over town, see, he didn't have that that much, see I had a lot more runs?

PG: You were on the street

MG: Well, anyway, one of them, in the earlier times, the Asheville Jaycettes were selling caramel to make money, you remember that, by any chance?

RP: yeah

MG: So I went somewhere, I believe it was in Lakeview Park, and they had a huge tractor trailer set up with the name outfit on the side and everything, and I had these six women from the Jaycettes spaced along in front of it, and this woman, I said "would you move that way just a little bit?", she moved a little bit, I said, "That's not quite enough, will you move a little more?" and she said, "Well I haven't got my glasses on and I can't see what I'm doing," without thinking I said,"one of those, eh?"

RP: One of those! God, no!

MG: and she said, "

PG: and you got in trouble

MG: and she went home and cried, and her husband came to the paper and wanted to beat me up (laughter) I knew I shouldn't have said it, but I was under time...

RP: It come out, didn't it?

MG: and by the way, the guy came in, and you remember Jimmy Rogers?

RP: yeah,

MG: Well, Jimmy was on the desk, and Jimmy fielded him and talked to him, and he never did see me. I'm sorry, I didn't mean...

PG: Now, Mr. Putnam, did you sell a lot of your pictures to the Citizen Times?

RP: Did I sell them? I done their advertising shots.

PG: You did? OK

MG: He did a lot of advertising.

RP: They didn't want to do them and I got...June talked them into calling me, so they's all the time helping me out a little bit like that and they, I said...

MG: He got ? with Roy Phillips ?, too

RP: I got a lot of...

PG: Who's Roy Phillips?

MG: Who is Roy Phillips? Isn't that right? Roy Phillips was the advertising man

RP: Years ago they call him, say, why don't you go with Gozner? or one of them, do a picture,

MG: Dozden

RP: Yeah, Gozden, Harry Gozden and I said, "OK, are you in a big hurry for it?", "I want it on 30 minutes." He'd always say that and Gozden,

PG: 30 minutes!

RP: we'd go out on there, and he'd have to tell some kind of joke

MG: yes, he did.

RP: he, Amos & Andy

MG: that's what I wanted to tell you, go ahead

RP: and he, we got this place, Deal Buick Company I believe it was, and I was doing pictures, and he says, I says, "by the way, how does, when are you going to use this picture?" He says next week, I says, "Well, why do I have to have it in 30 minutes?" He says, "Oh, just forget that, that's just the way he is." And I learn him that way.

MG: Harry Gozden was with Amos or Andy's brother.

RP: Andy's

MG: Andy, OK. Harry Godzen was his brother.

RP: You remember when he come to Asheville?
MG: Uh, he came several times.

RP: Yeah I know, but

MG: I don't remember specifically, no

RP: I was doing the, they had their class reunion, his wife did, and he was there then, and he come over there with them that night, and, Harry was in there, and all of them, so I made that big group picture, those people, and sat and talked to him for a while, and then I left, but, why he wanted those pictures so quick, told...

MG: that was from Roy Phillips.

RP: Yeah, but

MG: Gozden, what he said about jokes, you never saw him but what he didn't tell you a joke.

RP: he stopped you!

MG: Now, he had some really good ones, too. he was good!

RP: They wasn't what you'd call real filthy. Some of 'em was.

MG: Yeah, some of them were, too.

RP: And then drag out jokes, and he told some pretty smooth jokes.

MG: He was clever.

RP: He never told the same one twice.

MG: Wasn't he Jewish?

RP: No!

MG: I thought he was

RP: I thought he was, too, for a while.

MG: I swear, I thought he was.

RP: And, but he wasn't.

PG: ...was a man raised me, just about my Dad's best friend, Bill Snow, who told jokes all the time, did you know Bill?

MG: I knew Bill. Yeah, little guy, white hair, yeah

PG: he told jokes

MG: Did you ever know Bill? He was in the JayCees. Big JayCees.

PG: right, but they told jokes, he told jokes everytime you saw him

MG: nice guy

PG: Oh, wonderful. he was like me other father

MG: Oh, realy, well I really liked, is he still living?

PG: No, it's been about ten years since he's been gone

MG: I always thought he was a lot younger than I was

PG: well, he had that hair that made him look real young.

RP: What are we doing living?

MG: that's a good question. Sometimes it's not worht it, is it?

RP: You never saw ? Lee???

MG: well, no, not yet

PG: Be hard to carry your cameras around with that.

RP: I done a lot of cooking and washing clothes

MG: Well, I tell you, there's one thing about one of those, you could hang your camera off there and be pretty steady

RP: make a ?

PG: make a tripod

MG: well, talking about this, there's a lot of twists to photography. One, is if you're in a crowd, you've got to hold the

camera up, and have a high enough shutter speed and fire over them.

PG: I've had to do that, I'm short...

MG: all right, that's one, another one is if you've got slow film, dark clothes, slap it up on the wall, tie it, shut the shutter, fire it, guess, done it a lot.

PG: does that work?

MG: it works well,

RP: I had an invention I was going to make. You know, you're looking in your camera, I was going to make this, periscope rig on it, and so you could look in the camera, and look down here at it. Course I never did come out with it.

MG: Well, you know, that's one thing, talking about that, that you had with a Rollex, understand, now let me tell you what I did with a Rolly once, you're not supposed, in those days they wouldn't let us shoot in the court room, period, but I sat in the courtroom with a Rollei, and the prisoner's over here, and I could see, look down like this, and see what I was getting, by the way, a Rollei had a shutter you could not hear, it was silent

PG: it was quiet? really, that's nice

MG: Well, anyway, and also the Leicas. ? I fired some good shots of this guy sitting over there, course we didn't run them cause it's against the law. But I'm saying that you can do it.

PG: These days you could use them.

MG: That reminds me, what's that guy's name in Madison County, he's just died fairly

RP: Ponder?

MG: Ponder. OK, Ponder kept being accused of stealing votes and this and that and so forth.

PG: right, the Ponders, I remember

MG: right, I had an assignment to shoot a picture of him. Anyway I could get it. So I had a Rollei, and I grabbed him on the street, over there on the other side of the Arcade, somewhere in there, and we ran it, and he called me every name there was.

PG: Yeah, he tried to be pretty elusive, didn't he?

MG: Well, the next day he was acquitted, and they sent me over to get pictures of him, and I was the nicest guy that ever...(laughter)

PG: ...changed

RP: Well, the trouble then, put your name under who shot the picture, and, anybody wants to get a hold of you, they can get a hold of you,

PG: Yeah,

MG: talking about Johnny Jones, I don't know wheter this is ?, but I guess Vaughn Cannon? was before the war, wasn't he?

RP: Yeah

MG: You ever heard of Vaughn Cannon?

PG: I have, but

MG: Well, Vaughn Cannon was supposedly a member of the, they didn't call it the Mafic, but the gang,

RP: almost

MG: and he owned all the ganbling rackets around here and everything, and in fact he had a daughter, what was her name? I made her picture one time, she was a beauty, wow! Anyway, one Sunday morning, the decision had been made to take the gambling joints out, by the Citizen-Times. Don S. Elias. And so Johnny Jones and I started down College St.

PG: Where were they mostly?

MG: all along college street, I mean and other places, too, but concentrated in there

PG: College near Pritchard Park?

MG: No,

PG: or up towards?

MG: the other way

PG: up towards Beaucather Mountain?

END OF TAPE.